Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1-7 (Canceled)
- 8. (Currently amended) An e-mail message filtering method, comprising:

<u>a security manager</u> receiving an <u>enerypted</u> e-mail message from a remote server, <u>e-mail message associated with at least one recipient identifier, the email message</u> including signature data;

decrypting the email message in accordance with encryption data;

the security manager extracting the signature data from the e-mail message;

the security manager verifying the extracted signature data by accessing a

signature verification server; and

the security manager processing transmitting the e-mail message to said at least one recipient identifier in accordance with response to at least one predetermined result of said verifying.

- 9. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising employing an automated policy to determine whether the e-mail message signature should be verified.
- 10. (Original) The method of Claim 8, further comprising employing an automated policy to determine the requirements for verification of signature data.
- 11. (Original) An e-mail message transmission system, comprising:

means for receiving an e-mail message, the e-mail message including at least one recipient identifier;

means for identifying a remote certificate server corresponding to a target e-mail server associated with said at least one recipient identifier;

means for querying said identified remote server for encryption data corresponding to the target e-mail server;

means for encrypting said e-mail message in accordance with said encryption data from said remote server; and

means for transmitting said encrypted e-mail message to said remote server.

- 12. (Original) The system of Claim 11, further comprising means for applying a security policy to the e-mail message, the security policy results employed by said means for identifying and said means for querying.
- 13. (Currently amended) A method for signing an e-mail message, comprising:

 receiving an e-mail message by a security manager of an e-mail firewall;

 the security manager determining if a signature is required for the received e-mail message by applying a signature policy;

retrieving a signing certificate for the message in response to said applying a signature policy by applying reference to a signature policy;

applying the retrieved signing certificate to the message; and forwarding the message for further processing by the e-mail firewall.

- 14. (Original) The method of Claim 13 wherein said determining if a signature is required for the message is by applying a first signature policy and said retrieving of a signature is by reference to a second signature policy.
- 15. (Original) The method of Claim 13 wherein said determining and said retrieving is by reference to applying of one signature policy.